Simply Better!

C O N T I N U O U S   I M P R O V E M E N T

Self-Assessment System

Management of Process Quality

Dimension Workbook

These icons will help you to find your way through all
Simply Better! products:

Resources	Answer-Score-Brainstorm	Group Exercise	Case Study
Helpful Hints	Key terms and Concepts	Useful Notes	World Class

Introduction

Management of Process Quality examines the systematic processes your organization uses to improve the quality of its key services, service delivery, and overall performance. It also examines the integration of quality into the design and development of new and/or improved services, the management of process quality for all work units, and contractor performance.

By the time you have completed the dimension, you will have identified strengths and opportunities for improvement in these four sections:

A. Design and Introduction of Services

How new and/or improved services are developed to ensure higher quality and improved performance.

B. Service Delivery

How key processes, e.g., assessment, training, and placement, are managed and improved.

C. Administrative Services

How key administrative processes are managed so that current requirements for quality and operational performance are met and continuously improved.

D. Contractor Performance

How the quality of services furnished by contractors is assured and improved.

In a world class organization, strong emphasis is placed on design quality. Problem and waste prevention are achieved through building quality into key services and service delivery processes.

Continuous improvement emphasizes interventions upstream at the early stages in processes. The approach is embedded in the way an organization functions: improvement is part of the daily work of all work units and staff, improvement processes seek to eliminate problems at their source, and improvement is driven by opportunities to do better.

Improvement is driven not only by the desire to provide better services, but also by the need to be responsive and efficient. To meet these objectives, continuous improvement must contain cycles of planning, execution, and evaluation, including information which provides direct links between performance goals and internal operations.

Services

Work done for others. The completion of a process that provides an intangible product which meets a particular customer need. Some workforce development services include job information and referral, training, and filling job orders.

Customer

The people, organizations, or groups receiving the products or services of your organization. In the S-A-S, customers are job-seekers and employers, the direct beneficiaries of local workforce development services.

Process

An operation that changes material or information from one form to another. A process is a series of interrelated tasks that transform and add value to input thereby creating output.

Customer Satisfaction

The degree to which your organization meets or exceeds the needs and expectations of those you serve.

Customer Transaction

The interaction, or act of contact, between an organization and its customer. Frontline staff are a common point of personal interaction in a local workforce development organization.

Contractor

An entity which is under agreement to deliver a specified set of goods or services within defined price and time limits.

Service Standards

The desired achievement level for the measured performance of a service. Services standards should address key aspects of services including integrity, cost, and quality.

Getting Started

Now that you are familiar with the continuous improvement concepts and terms for Management of Process Quality, you are ready to look at how your own organization handles these issues. There are five exercises to complete this dimension.

Answer the Questions

This exercise involves developing a shared understanding of how your organization works. When discussing and answering the questions, your team should develop a common understanding of what is done, who does it, how often, how well, the results achieved, and how well it is documented.

Score the Questions

This exercise is about determining a consensus team score for each section. For ease of arriving at a score for the section, each question or sub-element of a question is considered to have equal weight. Please see the instructions on the next page.

Brainstorm Strengths and Opportunities

This exercise will help you identify your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Brainstorming can occur after each question is scored or after the entire section has been scored. The purpose of brainstorming is to get ideas out quickly; discussion will come later during the next exercise. All ideas should be recorded using a flip chart or the blank spaces provided in the Brainstorm sections of the booklet.

Discuss and Rank Strengths and Opportunities

This exercise will help you to make your many lists of strengths and opportunities much more manageable. It will be done after you have finished answering, scoring, and brainstorming for all sections in the dimension. Please see the instructions near the end of the booklet.

Plan for Action

This exercise will lead your team through several initial steps in the overall process for implementing continuous improvement changes. This step may be optional for your team at this stage, depending on what process your organization has chosen to develop a final action plan.

Score the Questions

Follow these instructions to find your team score for where your organization stands on Management of Process Quality.

Step One

Individually or as a team decide where your organization falls along the thermometer. This is a continuum, so don't be afraid to locate yourself anywhere along the thermometer.

Step Two

Using a crayon or marker, fill in the thermometer up to the point on the scale which best matches your organization. Remember, this is a subjective judgment, so precision is impossible!

Step Three

For each section, mark the average score on the bottom scale. You may want to eyeball the average length of the lines to come up with a score, or you may want to compute the average. Again, because this is subjective, precise scoring is not necessary.

0%   50%   100%
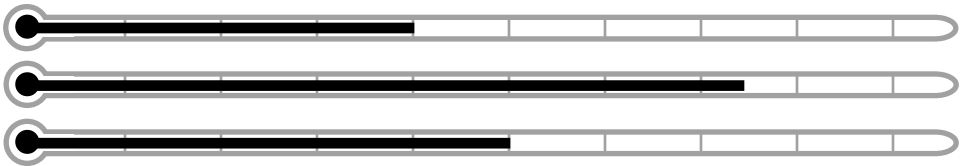
In this example, the score is about 55%, which is very good! Most organizations seriously involved in quality and continuous improvement can expect to fall in the 40% - 60% range. Even nationally recognized award winners rarely score above 75% across all categories.

Answer Score Brainstorm

Within each of the Sections - **A** through **D** - you will repeat the following three exercises:

- **Answer** the questions as a team.

- **Score** your organization.

- **Brainstorm** strengths and opportunities for improvement.

After you have covered all of the sections in the dimension, you will complete your work by doing the final two exercises:

- **Discuss and rank** your entire list of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

- **Plan** for action (optional at this stage).

You now have the background information and instructions you need to begin to answer, score and brainstorm the questions for Management of Process Quality. Before you continue, be sure that everyone on your team understands the general concepts and terms being used. Also, be sure that everyone has a clear understanding of the instructions and scoring system. Finally, check for consensus about the process that will be used. Remember, this is your process, so feel free to modify and improve it to suit the needs of your team and organization.

A. Design and Introduction of Services

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1	Option 2
• **Answer** the entire section • **Score** the entire section • **Brainstorm** the entire section	• **Answer** question 1 • **Score** question 1 • **Brainstorm** question 1 • Continue with question 2

Answer these questions:

1. **How do we design and introduce new services?**

2. **Before the launch of new services, how do we validate that we, or our contractors, have the capability to meet the design requirements and standards for performance and quality?**

Q1. Service design should begin with efforts to meet customer requirements; however, effective design should also consider cycle time and productivity of the service delivery process. This might entail detailed mapping of the service process to achieve efficiency as well as to meet customer requirements. Effective design should also take into account the interests of all stakeholders.

Q1. A measurement plan should spell out what will be measured, how and when measurements are to be made, and performance levels or standards to be used to guide, monitor, and improve the process.

Score Section A
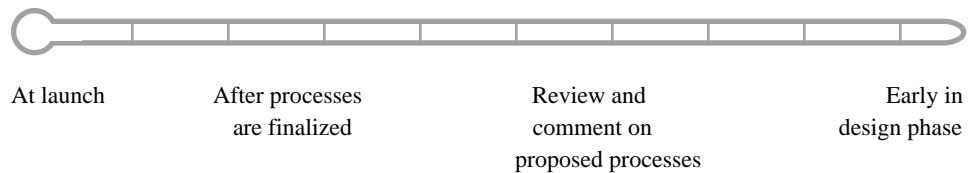
1. How do we design and introduce new services?

We get customers' input and use their needs and expectations to develop service design requirements.

Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always

We use the design requirements to create processes which are supported by clear measurement plans.

Never	Occasionally	Often	Always

We share all requirements for service delivery processes with all units, staff, partners, and contractors.

At launch	After processes are finalized	Review and comment on proposed processes	Early in design phase

2. Before launch of new services, how do we validate that we, or our contractors, have the capability to meet the design requirements and standards for performance and quality?

We seek the comments and recommendations from frontline staff.

Never	Occasionally	Often	Always

We conduct trial runs on new services.

Never	Occasionally	Often	Always

0%   50%   100%

Brainstorm Section A

- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).

- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.

- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.

- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

B. Service Delivery

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1	Option 2
• **Answer** the entire section • **Score** the entire section • **Brainstorm** the entire section	• **Answer** question 1 • **Score** question 1 • **Brainstorm** question 1 • Continue with question 2

Answer these questions:

1. **How do we maintain the performance of key processes to ensure that they meet design requirements?**

2. **How do we measure and analyze our processes to improve quality and performance?**

Q2. Analytic tools include process analysis and research which refer to a wide range of possible approaches for improving processes. Examples include process mapping, optimization experiments, basic and applied research, error proofing, and reviewing critical encounters between employees and customers from the point of view of customers and employees.
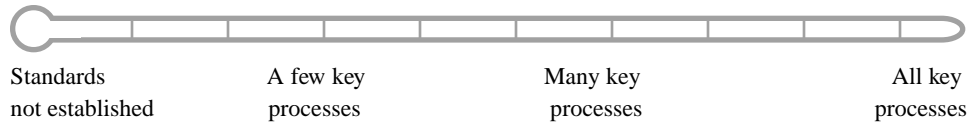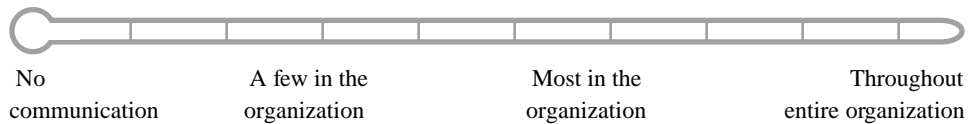
$\mathbf{S}$core Section B

1. How do we maintain the performance of key processes to ensure that they meet design requirements?

We have established output and quality standards for:

Standards not established	A few key processes	Many key processes	All key processes

We have clearly communicated the requirements, expectations, and standards for key processes to:

No communication	A few in the organization	Most in the organization	Throughout entire organization

We provide training to staff on skills and techniques to meet service standards.

Never	Ocasionally	Often	Continuously

2. How do we measure and analyze our processes to improve quality and performance?

We collect performance data related to the standards for:
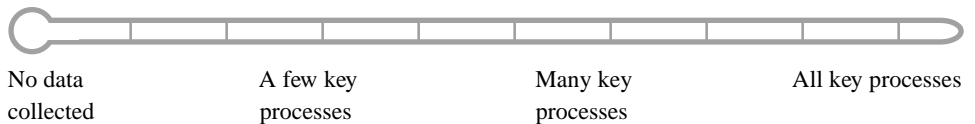
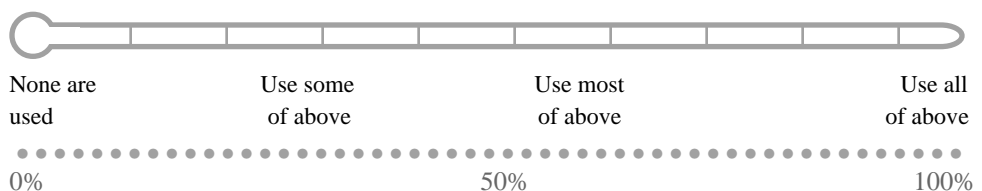| No data collected	A few key processes	Many key processes	All key processes

We compare and analyze performance vs standard for each process.

Never	Ocasionally	Frequently	Continuously

We use a variety of analytic tools to identify and solve problems that impede service delivery.

None	For some parts of organization	Many parts of organization	Throughout entire organization
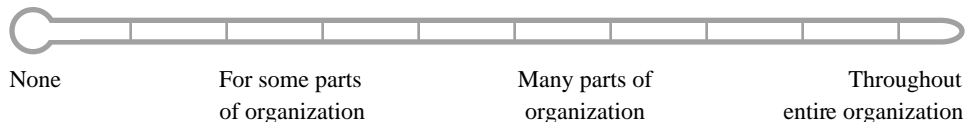
We have simplified and improved quality, cycle time, and operational performance using:
a) process research; b) benchmarking; c) customer information; and
d) alternate technology.

None are used	Use some of above	Use most of above	Use all of above

0%	50%	100%

Brainstorm Section B

- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).

- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.

- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.

- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

C. Administrative Services

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1	Option 2
• **Answer** the entire section • **Score** the entire section • **Brainstorm** the entire section	• **Answer** question 1 • **Score** question 1 • **Brainstorm** question 1 • Continue with questions 2-3

Answer these questions:

1. **How are the requirements of internal customers built into the design of our administrative services?**

2. **How do we maintain performance of our key administrative services?**

3. **How do we evaluate and improve the quality of our administrative services?**

Q1. Administrative services are those which support the organization's delivery of external customer services but which are not usually designed in detail with the customer services themselves. Administrative service requirements usually depend significantly on internal requirements. Organizational functions covered under this area include accounting, management information, public relations, personnel, legal services, property management and secretarial services.
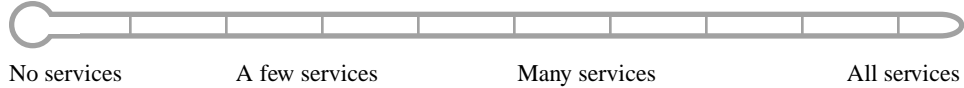
Score Section C

1. How are the requirements of internal customers built into the design of our administrative services?

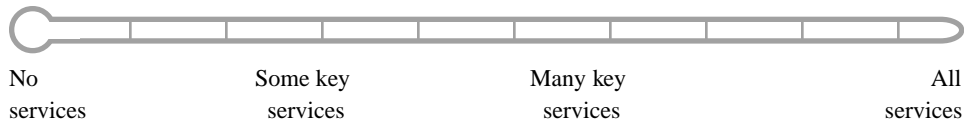We know who the customers are for our administrative services.

| Customers not identified | Some customers identified | Many customers identified | All customers identified |

Internal customers' requirements are incorporated into the design of:

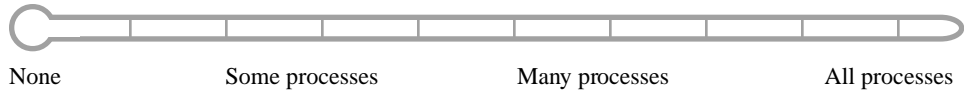| No services | A few services | Many services | All services |

2. How do we maintain performance of our key administrative services?

Each key service is backed by a measurement plan which indicates what will be measured, how, when, and the standards for performance.

| No services | Some key services | Many key services | All services |

We compare and analyze performance vs standard for each process.

| None | Some processes | Many processes | All processes |

3. How do we evaluate and improve the quality of our administrative services?

We use a variety of analytic tools to identify and solve problems that impede service delivery.

| None | A few tools | Many tools | Great variety of tools |

We have simplified and improved the quality, of our administrative services by using:
a) process research ; b) benchmarking; c) customer information; and d) alternate technology.

| None | Use some | Use most | Use all |

0%   50%   100%

Brainstorm Section B

- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).

- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.

- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.

- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

D. Contractor Performance

You may complete this section one of two ways:

Option 1	Option 2
• **Answer** the entire section • **Score** the entire section • **Brainstorm** the entire section	• **Answer** question 1 • **Score** question 1 • **Brainstorm** question 1 • Continue with questions 2-3

Answer these questions:

1. **How do we assure that services provided by others meet our performance and quality requirements?**

2. **How do we help contractors improve the quality and delivery of their services?**

3. **How do we improve our procurement process?**

Q1. The term contractor refers to any "other entity" provider of goods and services. Their services may occur at any stage of the service delivery process.

Contractors often have the capability to provide a unique set of services to specific customer groups; therefore, their performance is critical to the overall success of the organization. It may be advisable to consider establishing longer-term relationships with such contractors and to support efforts to build their overall capabilities.
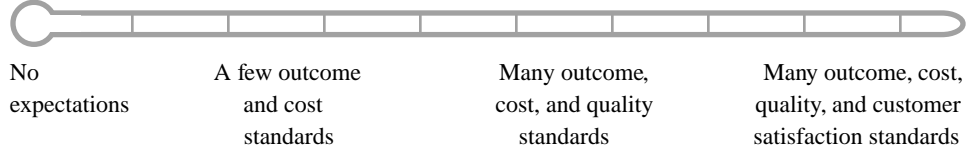
Q2. Actions and plans to assist contractors might include joint planning, rapid information and data exchange, use of benchmarking, partnership arrangements, training, longer-term agreements, performance incentives, and recognition.
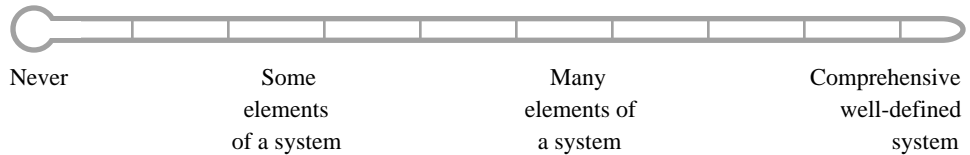
Score Section D

1. How do we assure that services provided by others meet our performance and quality requirements?

Written agreements specify the measures, indicators, and standards that we expect.

No expectations	A few outcome and cost standards	Many outcome, cost, and quality standards	Many outcome, cost, quality, and customer satisfaction standards

We analyze contractors' performance, quality, and price using:

Never	Some elements of a system	Many elements of a system	Comprehensive well-defined system

We use our process for analyzing contractors' performance:

Never or at end of contract	Occasionally	Regularly	Continuously

2. How do we help contractors improve the quality and delivery of their services?

We work with contractors to improve their ability to meet requirements:

It's up to them	In a few ways	In many ways	Extensively
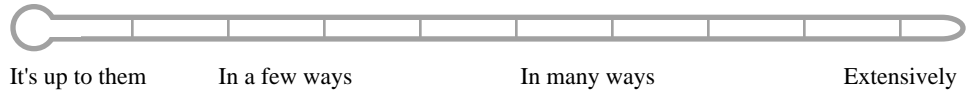
3. How do we improve our procurement process?

We get feedback from our proposal reviewers, contractors, and others in our organization for improving our procurement process.

Never	Sometimes	Often	Every time

0%   50%   100%

Brainstorm Section D

- Going in a circle, have each member of the team share one strength (passing is allowed).

- Record the idea on a flipchart; discuss the idea only enough to make sure that it is correctly recorded.

- Keep going around until everyone's ideas are recorded.

- Repeat the same process for opportunities for improvement.

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

Summary of Team Scores

Average the four scores to get an overall score for Management of Process Quality.

A. Design and Introduction of Services
> %

D. Contractor Performance
> %

B. Service Delivery
> %

C. Administrative Services
> %

Overall **S**core
> **%**

Remember, this is not a score of how good your organization is - it is a score reflecting how far you are on the road to continuous improvement. This is what the scores tell you:

0% - 10%
You have not or have barely begun to implement continuous improvement into your processes.

10% - 30%
You have begun to implement continuous improvement in a few of your processes.

30% - 60%
You have implemented continuous improvement in a wide range of your processes in many parts of your organization.

60% - 80%
You have implemented continuous improvement processes throughout virtually all of your organization.

80% and above
You have world-class, exceptionally sophisticated processes in all areas of your organization, and you continuously improve the processes themselves.

Discuss and Rank Strengths and Opportunities

Now that you have answered and scored the questions and brainstormed strengths and opportunities for improvement, you need to make some sense of the large quantities of information you have. This exercise will help you to make this information much more manageable. Your flipcharts should be hung around the room where everyone can see them.

• **Group** the similar strengths and opportunities into categories to make the list more manageable. Depending on how many items you have, you may want to start out by brainstorming categories, by eliminating duplicate items, or by marking similar items with numbers or colored dots. Individual items may fall into more than one category. As with brainstorming, there should not be much discussion at this stage, just enough to develop the categories.

• **Choose** the order in which you want to discuss the strengths and opportunities listed. Some may not require much discussion. It can be helpful to set time limits for each item.

• **Discuss** the strengths and opportunities in depth. You do not need to solve problems now; you only need to be sure that you come to a common understanding of which are the most vital to be worked on or represent potential for taking action right away.

• **Rank** the opportunities in the order of importance for developing next steps and future actions.

Plan for Action

Many teams will be instructed by the coordinator to begin the process of planning for action. This process will lead your team through action planning steps and will result in an initial redesign of a service or process.

- **Select** a service or process to be improved. From the list of Opportunities for Improvement select one of the top vital few which were identified as a result of answering the questions. The relative scores for each question or section should provide a starting point for identifying where the largest gaps exist. The priorities for improvement in the organization should also be considered. Decision can be reached by multi-voting and coming to consensus.

- **Describe** the current process. Definition of the current situation began while answering the questions. Further research is now needed to identify the key features of the current process, describe the work flow, and identify current process measures.

- **Determine** the wants, needs, and expectations for the service or process. Determine who the 'customers' of the process are and what they want, need and expect. This step helps define the future desired state for the area under improvement.

- **Gather** data to determine the extent to which the current process meets the wants and expectations. Doing this step provides vital measurable information about the extent to which current reality meets the desired level of performance.

- **Redesign** the improved process to meet the wants, needs, and expectations. Define the design criteria and design the improved process. A measurement system should also be established, and requirements for implementation should be determined.

Take Action

After your team completes the five action planning steps for several of the top-ranked opportunities for improvement, it is time to stop. Your assessment work within this dimension is complete.

Congratulate yourselves for your hard work and accomplishments!

Your next steps are to get together with all the other dimension teams to share what everyone has found and to discuss and rank all the vital opportunities. Once your organization chooses the most important opportunities for taking action, you are ready to take the last two steps in the continuous process improvement model - implement the improvement and manage the process of change.

• **Implement** the improvement. Develop an implementation plan which specifies desired results, assigns responsibilities, and provides time frames. The plan should be approved, communicated, and monitored for results.

• **Manage** the process of change. Obtain customer feedback, monitor performance and impact, communicate the results, and fine tune the process by identifying new areas for improvement.